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10 YEAR PEACE BID

New GDR Offer to West Germany

The German Democratic Republic has offered to sign a ten-year peace treaty with West Germany, and negotiate an arms standstill.

The GDR proposal for peaceful co-existence between the two German states consisted of the following points:

1. The GDR and West Germany should conclude a ten-year peace treaty, and pledge themselves to refrain from the use of force during this period.

2. All war propaganda in Germany should be ended, and agreement should be reached on an arms standstill in both German states.

3. The trade agreement between the two German states should be prolonged, together with all the subsidiary agreements.

4. Both German governments should urge the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the NATO states and the Warsaw Treaty states.

The new GDR step was first proposed by Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, in a speech to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party on December 15th.

The Central Committee gave its full support to the proposals, commenting:

"The implementation of these proposals would be an important step towards the relaxation of tension in Germany; this would provide the necessary conditions for the establishment of a confederation of the two German states.

"This confederation would be a suitable form for the peaceful side-by-side existence of the socialist GDR and the capitalist German Federal Republic pending the final unification of Germany as a peace-loving democratic state. Such a confederation would not weaken the class struggle, but would, by means of the neutralisation of Germany, push back militarism and thus make easier the struggle of the whole German working class. The struggle against atomic arms and a policy of revenge is most closely linked with the creation of the necessary conditions for a rapprochement between the two German states, and the future reunification of Germany. Reunification can only be prepared by means of overcoming militarism and neonazism, and by establishing a predominance of the peace forces in West Germany.

"In order to make progress in the fight for peace, it is necessary to establish unity of action of the German working class, since this is the decisive force needed to unite all the peace-loving sections of the population."

Explaining his proposal to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, Walter Ulbricht recalled the GDR proposal for complete disarmament in Germany by 1964. The proposal, made to the United Nations General Assembly on September 9th, foresaw a three-stage programme by which both German states should disarm and become neutralised in the next four years.

"Since we must assume that negotiations on disarmament will take a long time" Walter Ulbricht

(cont. on next page)

WAGES UP: PRICES DOWN

Wages, production and consumption have all risen steadily in the GDR in the past three years, and prices have shown a downward trend, according to figures released in Berlin at the end of 1960.

Here is a short selection of some of the key figures, which may be slightly modified when the final returns for 1960 come in:

Production. Gross industrial production has risen from 53,000 million marks in 1957 to 71,000 million in 1960, an increase of 34%. Agricultural production also rose in the same period; meat was up 16%, and milk up 36%.

Wages and prices. Total individual income (wages, pensions, etc) rose from 53,000 million marks in 1957 to 65,000 million in 1960, an increase of 23%. In the same period prices dropped by over 4%. The biggest income increases went to peasants, whose net earnings went up by 36% in the three-year period.

Food supplies. There were big increases in sales of all high-quality foodstuffs. The figures in thousand tons are:

	1957	1960
Meat	600	761
Butter	150	225
Milk	714	1072
Cheese	37	50
Coffee	9	19
Tropical fruit	286	536
Consumer goods.		
Shoes (million)	16	26
Furniture (million marks)	784	1279
TV sets (thousand)	100	450
Refrigerators (thousand)	28	158
Watches (thousand)	1050	1720

(cont. from front page)

stated, "we make the proposal to Herr Adenauer that we should reach an agreement on the maintenance of peace for the next ten years, for a start. Such an agreement would mean no loss either to capitalism in West Germany or to socialism in the German Democratic Republic; it would be a boon to the whole German people, who would be saved from the danger of war for the next ten years.

"We also address ourselves to Mr Kennedy, the new President of the United States, with the request that he should assess the situation in German realistically, and help to remove from Germany those factors of conflict which could lead to war. Such factors have been created by the West German Government in West Berlin. We give our support to the proposal made by the Soviet Government that a Summit Conference should be summoned for spring 1961, with the aim of reaching a peaceful solution of the Berlin problem, and the preparation of a peace treaty with the two German states.

"Neither the United States nor West Germany would lose anything if the centres of unrest in West Berlin were removed, and if all revenge propaganda and hostile acts against the socialist countries, which have their origin in West Berlin, were brought to an end.

"We are ready to guarantee fully normal communications between West Berlin and other states."

W. GERMANY – MUSEUM PIECE?

Will West Germany become a museum piece, the last remnant of capitalism in a socialist world? This was the question posed by Chairman Walter Ulbricht in a report to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin on December 15th.

Walter Ulbricht was reporting on the world conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow, and the Moscow Declaration published on December 6th. He stated:

"Is it conceivable that West Germany should remain outside the historic developments to be seen all over the world? Can West Germany remain as a museum exhibit of capitalist servitude and exploitation for the coming generations in a free socialist world? I fear that our grandsons, who will work and live in communism, will have to do without such a monstrosity. World history will not pass West Germany by.

"It is true that owing to certain special conditions West Germany has not experienced so many economic crises as, for instance, the United States. But the special circumstances favourable to capitalism in West Germany are slowly disappearing, and West Germany is being dragged into the same contradictions of the capitalist jungle as all the other capitalist countries.

"The hectic activity of the militarists and the revanchists, their attacks on the remnants of freedom and democracy, their brutal suppression of all genuine opposition, are not signs of strength, but of great uncertainty. Adenauer himself said: 'You do not realise, gentlemen, how thin the floor is on which we stand'. In this case Adenauer was perfectly right. The floor is very thin, and is becoming thinner every year. One day it will break, and the people of West Germany will carry out the sentence of world history . . .

"All Germans ask the question: What are the perspectives for the German nation, and how can the German question be solved?

"We have repeatedly proved that militarism and imperialism were always the misfortune of the German people, and are still its misfortune today in West Germany. In order to ensure their rule, the German imperialists and monopolists partitioned Germany . . .

"We are not of the opinion that steps to reunite the German nation can only be taken when the working class and socialism have triumphed in West Germany. Since Adenauer and the ruling circles of German monopoly capitalism reckon with a long period of partition, and are ready to accept the risk of civil war, the most important thing is to banish this danger in good time. For this reason we propose a sensible solution, a solution which does not make a decision on the social structure necessary as a condition for the peaceful solution of the German problem. We propose a national compromise, in the form of a German confederation.

"Our proposal for confederation is the only serious proposal which has been made for understanding and reunification under the present historical conditions and the international situation. Nobody in West Germany has been able to make any serious objection to the idea of a German confederation.

"We cannot regard it as a serious objection when the opponents of German unity in West Germany say: 'The confederation plan would make it necessary for us to recognise the existence of the GDR, and this would conflict with our theory that the GDR does not exist'. This is simply silly. The existence of the GDR does not depend upon the theories of such people.

"Another argument is: 'There has never been a case in history in which a capitalist state and a socialist state formed a confederation'. This is perfectly true, but the fact that something has never been tried does not mean that it is impossible. There are plenty of new factors, such as the possibility of avoiding war; the collapse of imperialism; and in particular the existence of the socialist German Democratic Republic.

"Every German who longs for the restoration of German unity, and who rejects the idea of civil war and mutual destruction, must come to the conclusion that the only way out is the establishment of a German confederation.

"But it is one thing to show the West German workers that a German confederation would bring them only advantages. It is rather more difficult to convince the West German middle class and intelligentsia. Now I should like to address myself to the West German bourgeoisie on the question of a national compromise. Why should a dyed-in-the-wool capitalist enter into a compromise, and abandon his plan to make the whole of Germany capitalist by force?

"It is an illusion if any West German capitalist believes that he can maintain his domination for all time simply by rejecting reunification and the establishment of a confederation. This means that he is not considering the power of the West German working class, and the peace movement. The growing influence of the

German Democratic Republic will make itself felt, whether we have a confederation or not.

"I believe that it is healthier and more sensible for the West German capitalist to work for a peaceful solution, and to curb those forces in his own class which are so blind that they work for a catastrophe, the victims of which would include the capitalist class.

"In view of the relation of forces in the world, and the present stage of historical development, we can see the possibility of reaching an understanding with the members of the capitalist class which will help them and their families in the transition to a new stage in human history. In the German Democratic Republic we have former members of the capitalist class who today hold respected positions in nationalised factories, who are able to develop their capabilities, and who are materially in a very favourable position. We can envisage that in the prospects opening up for Germany this solution would be of even more importance than it is at present in the GDR. I want to make myself quite clear: The working class is strong enough to guarantee a decent life and creative work to those members of the capitalist class, who show good sense, good will, and a readiness for understanding.

"I do not want anyone to misunderstand me. I do not propose today to the West German capitalists that they should stop being capitalists: I do not ask them to renounce their social system. I only propose to West German capitalists that they should abandon minor objections which might prevent them from supporting a German confederation as the way in which two German states with differing social orders may work together.

"It is possible that I shall be criticised for going too far in my offer to the capitalist class in West Germany. My answer is that such concessions are justified if they help to avoid civil war, and help to bring about a German confederation. We should leave no stone unturned in our efforts to achieve a national compromise for the maintenance of peace."

"Wilhelm-Pieck-Stadt"

The little town of Guben in the German Democratic Republic has been re-named "Wilhelm-Pieck-Stadt" in memory of Wilhelm Pieck, first President of the GDR, who was born there 85 years ago. President Pieck died on September 7th 1960.

AUSCHWITZ COMMANDANT RELUCTANTLY ARRESTED

West German police arrested SS Major Richard Baer, last commandant of Auschwitz extermination camp, on December 20th. Baer had been hiding out since the end of the war under a false name on the estate of Count Otto von Bismarck, Christian Democratic member of the West German Parliament. It could not be immediately ascertained whether Count Bismarck had known Baer's true identity. Bismarck has close nazi links: he served Hitler in top positions in the diplomatic service, and is today part-owner of the bank run by Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's financial wizard.

As nazi ambassador to Rome, Count Bismarck was directly connected with the deportation of Jews for liquidation in Auschwitz. In his book "The Final Solution" (London 1953), British author Gerald Reitlinger noted: "Bismarck proposed on December 10th (1942) that all the interned Jews (in Croatia) should be shipped to Trieste — presumably because Trieste had direct railway communication with Auschwitz and Treblinka."

The arrest of SS officer Baer forms part of the present West German policy of rounding up subordinate nazi officials who actually did the dirty work in the concentration camps, in order to camouflage its inactivity with regard to men like Dr Hans Globke, Adenauer's personal assistant, who gave the orders for the liquidation of European Jewry but never personally murdered anyone.

Baer is due to be tried at a monster trial of Auschwitz Camp personnel in Frankfurt (Main) in about 12 months time.

Reports from West Germany showed that the West German police would have had no trouble finding Baer at any time in the past few years if they had been interested. Although he was living under a false name, he was visited regularly by Frau Baer, who made no attempt to conceal her identity. He regularly received large sums of money from a certain Wilhelm Riedl, who was the administrator of estates in the southern part of West Germany which had been purchased by Baer during the war, and still registered in his name. Baer had purchased these estates with money stolen from persons gassed in Auschwitz.

After Baer's arrest, a man who had worked alongside him for the past few years commented: "Baer was such a decent chap, a real lover of animal life. Why, he even picked up injured birds and took them home to care for them until they could fly again."

More Swastikas

Neo-nazis smeared swastikas on buildings in Cologne, West Germany, once again just before Christmas. Police arrested two men, one of whom was Paul Josef Schoenen, who had just been released from prison after serving a ten-month sentence for daubing swastikas and nazi slogans on Cologne Synagogue on Christmas Eve 1959. Both the men arrested were associated with the neo-nazi German Reich Party.

"Territorial Army" Jobs for War Criminals

Top nazi generals whose war criminal record makes them unsuitable for employment in the regular West German Wehrmacht will soon be offered jobs in the "territorial army" to be raised by the West German Defence Ministry. This territorial army will be outside the NATO framework, and no heed need by paid to possible objections from West Germany's NATO partners.

A preliminary meeting of 50 of the generals concerned, several of whom have served sentences for war crimes committed in France and Belgium, was held at the end of November 1960 in Koblenz, according to reports from Bonn.

Trade Agreement With Cuba

The GDR concluded a five-year trade agreement with Cuba in Berlin on December 16th. The agreement was signed for Cuba by Dr Ernesto Guevara, who headed the Cuban delegation.

Under the agreement the two countries will exchange goods to a value of about 45 million dollars in 1961; the GDR will supply Cuba with full equipment for 17 factories, and Cuba will send the GDR coffee, leather, copper, tobacco, sugar and other goods.

BRECHT IN ENGLISH

Bertolt Brecht. Plays: Volume I. Published by Methuen & Co Ltd, London, 25 shillings.

When Bertolt Brecht died in East Berlin four years ago at the age of 58, Charlie Chaplin sent a message of condolences stating: "Germany has lost her greatest poet and dramatist, a man whose genius was recognised in the theatres of the whole world."

Chaplin's assessment of Brecht's stature was reflected in the obituary notes in papers as far apart geographically and politically as "Pravda" and the "New York Times". Hitherto the vast majority of people in the English-speaking world have had to take such statements on trust, for until now few of Brecht's poems have been available in adequate English translations, and few of his plays have been properly staged outside Germany.

The London publishing house of Methuen deserves the thanks of anyone interested in modern literature for producing the first volume of Brecht's plays in English translation. This first volume contains "The Threepenny Opera", Brecht's first big success, seen in Berlin in 1928; "The Life of Galileo", which this reviewer regards as his greatest play; "The Caucasian Chalk Circle", and the controversial radio-play "The Trial of Lucullus".

Now at last, people in the English-speaking world can make up their minds for themselves on the works of Brecht, or at least on that small section of his works presented in this volume. Before I write anything else I would like to urge everyone reading this review to buy or borrow a copy of this volume and read it carefully.

Brecht was a socialist and a humanist, and one of the points of his theory of "epic theatre" was that plays presented in this style were intended to "awaken the spectator to activity, and force him to make a decision". This may sound dull and propagandist to those who have never experienced a Brecht play, but Brecht was not only a theorist and a teacher: he was also a great dramatist. I think that the force (and entertainment value) of his writing comes through even in cold print.

Brecht knew that if he was going to teach people something, he had to get them into the theatre, and interest them, thrill them, and amuse them. He did all this in full measure; almost all his plays are packed with excitement, and a fair share of farce and knock-about comedy. He was one of the very few propagandists who was never a bore.

The high-brows and egg-heads in various countries have tried to claim Brecht as their own; he has become fashionable in various intellectual circles. But he did not write his plays and poems for them: he wrote them for everyone, for all the men and women in the world who want to make it a better place to live in.

He summed up his philosophy in the closing lines of "The Caucasian Chalk Circle", the last play of his which he lived to produce:

The children to the maternal, that they thrive;

The carriages to the good drivers that they are driven well;

And the valley to the waterers, that it shall bear fruit.

I have quoted these lines from the new translation of the play published in the volume under review; and this brings me to the question of the quality of the translation.

Translating an editorial article, or a political speech, from one language into another poses no particular problems for anyone who knows the two languages sufficiently well; translating a work of literature is much harder, and ideally demands a translator who not only has first-class command of the languages, but who can also write prose of the same calibre as the original. The task of translating the works of a really outstanding writer like Brecht is enough to give nightmares to anyone with any experience in this field.

Some German works are difficult to translate because of their involved and long-winded syntax; Brecht's German is quite different: It is deceptively plain; the sentences are clear and straightforward; the words are simple. But it is this very simplicity which is the trap for the unwary translator; if he does not watch out, the English version will be merely pedestrian.

I write here from experience. About 1952, Brecht rang me up and asked me if I could translate into English a short political statement he had made. It was one type-written sheet. I did my best, and after spending about five times as long on it as I normally would have done on a piece of this length, I took it round to his house. Very tactfully, and almost apologetically, Brecht started querying the exact shade of meaning in the first sentence. To make a long story short, after three hours of hard work we had altered every sentence, and almost every word of the translation, and I had learned a lot about the use of language which I had never known before.

After this discursion, I am glad to be able to say that the translation of the plays in the present volume is very satisfactory. Now go ahead and read them.

John Peet

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American Historians Urge "Recognise GDR"

Thirty American professors of history have urged President-Elect John Kennedy to recognise the GDR and the Chinese People's Republic. "Such a step would help to solve the problems of Berlin and Taiwan", the professors stated in an open letter. Representatives of most leading American universities were amongst the signatories.

Do-it-Yourself Page

Readers' comments and criticisms have always been a great help to us in publishing DEMOCRATIC GERMAN REPORT. We decided this time to make it easier for you to tell us what you think (with added comments on your own paper if you wish). Although we cannot answer all of you personally, we shall read and consider carefully every form, using whatever ideas we can.

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A VISIT TO DRESDEN

By Allen Mann

All larger towns and cities in what is now the German Democratic Republic were wrecked during the war, most of them heavily. Hit worst of all was Dresden, a city most famous for its art and architecture.

During the night of February 13th 1945 two short but concentrated air raids lasting together only 56 minutes destroyed most of the city's museums, theatres, schools, churches and palaces and smashed, partially or totally, 180,000 of a total 220,000 homes and flats. 35,000 people were killed in the raid. This puts Dresden onto the long list of cities which, like Warsaw, Rotterdam, Coventry and many Soviet cities, were bombed and destroyed in Hitler's war.

This one night of air raids has dominated Dresden's history since that date, and it recurs in almost every conversation with the people here. The wounds of the raid will not be completely banished from this city of 500,000 for many more years.

When I first visited Dresden in 1953, the whole centre of the city was still one broad field of rubble, dominated by a few ruined buildings once of architectural importance, and not torn down because there was some hope of restoring them.

Today there are still many ruined buildings in many parts of the city, but there have been two big changes. The last traces of rubble have been carted away by now, and, much more impressive, of course, whole rows of new buildings are shooting up everywhere in the city — sometimes next to or even surrounding a ruin or semi-ruin which will be broken up when the builders have time and opportunity. The whole city seems jammed with bricks, big prefabricated wall panels, cranes, cement-mixers and construction lorries. The new buildings, mostly containing about 40 flats, are given a wide variety of colours — ochre yellow, siena, creamy pastel grey and occasionally blue, and there are always brighter-coloured balconies to contrast with the wall colours and the red-tiled roofs. They are spaced widely enough to avoid the cramped quality of pre-war tenement homes and allow room for playgrounds and lawns.

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In the middle of the city, at the Altmarkt, or Old Market, a new shopping centre has been built. The broad square is lined with solid-looking buildings containing rows of well-decorated shops, a large department store, as well as cafés, a restaurant and in one building comfortable public rooms for playing billiards, chess or the German national card-game of "Skat". Lastly, there is the big restored "Kreuz" Church, home of the internationally-known boys' Kreuz Choir.

I liked the Altmarkt better than the somewhat similar Stalin Allee in East Berlin. Though smaller and less imposing than the big boulevard, it is more compact and therefore has a livelier, more active atmosphere. This is helped also by its more central location, and by the fact that the stores stay open till 8:00 p.m., something almost unknown in the republic's capital.

Every year the Altmarkt project is extended further eastwards and westwards, with new increasingly modern-looking homes and shops. Soon the new buildings will connect up with other rebuilt sections of the city, and the gaps will have disappeared. The market square will receive a big, interesting-looking hotel soon, too, with 500 beds, and on its other side will follow a capacious cultural centre with restaurants, theatres and an auditorium, club-rooms, a café and a tall slim tower with a view of the city.

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Visitors passing Dresden in the sight-seeing steamers which sail up and down the Elbe River have the best view of the city's famous riverside silhouette — a group of handsome buildings erected by successive monarchs of the famous old kingdom of Saxony, and dominated by the big restored Hofkirche (Court Church). Here the construction work has had to be infinitely more painstaking, and has cost many millions of marks.

The most famous of the restored buildings is the Zwinger, a beautiful courtyard with patterned lawns and fountains, framed by graceful baroque museum buildings with broad staircases. Every one of the countless stone cherubs and arched windows has been remade according to the old designs; today it is a pleasure to hear an open-air concert here or to visit one of the little collections — old pewter and tinware, porcelain, finely handwrought scientific apparatus of past centuries, royal armour and a small selection of natural history exhibits.

One side of the large courtyard is formed by the Semper Gallery; its art collection is the pride of Dresden. Evacuated hurriedly by the nazis during the war, and stored in wet, cold underground tunnels, many of the famous paintings suffered seriously. They were found by Soviet soldiers, restored carefully in the Soviet Union and then returned to their old home. Today thousands of art-lovers visit Dresden to see the many paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Titian and other masters and, especially, to admire the famous "Sistine Madonna" by Raphael.

My visit to Dresden concurred with the 400th anniversary of the city's museums, and the celebrations, which included conferences and discussions with art and architecture experts from all over the world, also saw several concentrated attempts to win a broader audience for the art galleries.

One day was devoted to the farm population of the area. Groups were invited in from various cooperative farms and shown around the gallery by the museum guides. On another day, arrangements were made with the trade unions for visits from a number of Dresden factories. One day was devoted to young people and school pupils. Evening forums were held where people were invited to express their opinions on how the museums could be improved and made even more popular.

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Dresden also has many other museums — still rather cramped, but gradually moving into reconstructed old buildings or modern new ones. One of the best known is the Hygiene Museum, largely because of its "glass woman" — one of a series of transparent models created here with great precision and sent out all over the world. I watched her as she slowly rotated on her pedestal, while one internal organ after another was illuminated and a tape recording explained its function and importance. The glass woman can "speak" in this way in 28 languages — ranging from English, French and German to Arabic, Bengali and Vietnamese. The model, which weighs over 60 lbs., contains more than 10 miles of coloured wires to show blood vessels, nerves and the like. Up till the present, the Hygiene Museum workshops have constructed 10 men, 34 of the more popular women, 4 glass horses and 2 cows.

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Dresden is filled with young people. A large proportion of these are the 15,000 students at the big Institute of Technology, main technical education

centre in the GDR, which has mushroomed in size during the past ten years. Here students from all parts of the Republic and the world study everything from electrical engineering and agricultural machinery all the way up to higher mathematics, astronomy and atomic energy. Among the many new classroom buildings and dormitories belonging to the Institute of Technology is one rather sinister-looking edifice. Once the provincial courthouse of Saxony, it was used by the nazis as a jail for antifascists condemned to death. It too was partially wrecked in the big air raid of 1945 — some prisoners were killed, others managed to escape in the confusion, and it was then abandoned for years.

Not long ago, however, thousands of students, instructors and even professors set to work on it, mostly with pick and shovel, and transformed the musty old building. With the help of these volunteers it was possible to win dozens of new well-lit lecture halls and classrooms. Only a group of death-cells were kept as they used to be under Hitler, as a reminder of the cruelty of fascism and the heroism of the opponents of its brutality from all over Europe who lost their lives here.

The many foreign students here and all the foreign visitors give Dresden a more international atmosphere than most GDR cities. Tourist groups from nearby Czechoslovakia and Poland visit in large numbers, and almost all visitors to the GDR who go beyond the borders of East Berlin come here too. In addition, there are long-standing ties of friendship with foreign cities like Coventry and Hiroshima, and the frequent exchange of visits and exhibitions helps to make the Dresdeners constantly aware of what World War II cost so many other cities in death and destruction. Its experiences and this constant atmosphere of friendship and exchange make Dresden a city deeply conscious of the need for peace in the world.

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The children of Dresden are especially lucky in having the big park called the Grosser Garten, one of Dresden's nicest features. It has playgrounds, a puppet stage, a big open-air theatre, also built by the people of the city in voluntary labour shifts, a boat-lake and a zoo, with a surprisingly large variety of animals for a city the size of Dresden. But best of all it has the Pioneer Railway — winding through the whole park on its miniature track, with small but well-functioning signals, switches and all the rest. The ticket-sellers, conductors and stationmasters are all youngsters belonging to the Young Pioneer organisation. Only the engineer, sitting in back of the little three foot high steam locomotive, is an adult; he looked very much like Gulliver in Lilliputland. But the train is used by adults as well as children, not only for trips with their kiddies through the big garden to the zoo, the rowboat lake or the open-air theatre, but even to and from work every day during the warmer months when the train is running. The children's railway is quicker than the tram, costs very little to ride, and follows a pleasant route through the park.

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What about the people of Dresden? I have always found them just a little more friendly and helpful and less pushy than in other cities of Germany. Perhaps because of this I even got to like their own musical variety of the Saxon accent, although this opinion is almost heresy in Germany where a Saxon accent usually evokes laughter or dismay (somewhat like a Brooklyn accent in America). But I must admit that it was amusing to be guided around a museum by a pretty young guide who spoke of "borcelain" and "Amerigans" — Saxons are prone to substitute b,g and d for p,k and t.

The people of Dresden do not hide their complaints or criticisms any more than the people of other cities here. And there are problems. Housing construction is often hampered when the outside walls are built very rapidly but the new residents cannot move in because it takes so long to put in floors, wiring and plumbing. Then, there are increasing demands for more variety in the architecture of the new blocks of flats. The varied colours are nice, but most of the ones now going up are built according to the same designs — thus saving money and work and permitting quicker construction.

These are typical complaints in a country like the GDR, where the construction of new industries, new homes, school buildings, cultural institutions and the restoration of old architectural masterpieces are all competing for both labour and building materials. There are then the usual symptoms of growth — a rather hectic atmosphere and lots of worries.

This is how Dresden home construction programme has looked in past years. Until 1949 or 1950, most attention was paid to restoring damaged buildings. Then new construction began — at about the pre-war rate of 900 or 1000 flats a year. As the country and its industry got better established, the rate increased: in 1955, 1300 flats were built, in 1956 — 1700; 1957 — over 2000; 1959 — 3000, and last year the goal was 4000 flats.

The people of Dresden have many things to be proud of — besides the ones mentioned and the high level of education and social services typical of the GDR as a whole. There is the new shopping centre at Borsberg Strasse, smaller than the Altmarkt, but much more modern, built with remarkable originality and good taste. Then there is the new aircraft plant, the only one in the GDR, built here completely from scratch. The GDR's first atomic reactor was also built up in the vicinity of Dresden.

The restoration of Dresden started slowly and has faced many difficulties and handicaps. Yet every visitor can now see how a handsome new city is growing up again, one with widely-spaced homes, green parks and tree-lined streets, with attractive stores, modern schools and cultural attractions. More and more the memory of the old city with its overcramped tenement flats, and also of the disaster which destroyed them, will recede into the background.

GDR Youth to Build Guinea's First Boarding School

Members of the Free German Youth organisation are now completing plans to build the first-ever boarding school in the West African state of Guinea. It will be a gift from the young people of the German Democratic Republic.

All the plans for the school, which will accomodate 100 girls, are being drawn up in voluntary shifts by Free German Youth members in a Berlin architectural firm. All materials for building the school, with the exception of sand and clay, which can be locally produced, will be provided as a gift by the GDR. When the plans are completed, Free German Youth members will travel to Guinea to help build the school, and to train Guinea workers in the various branches of he building trade.

One Million TV Sets

The German Democratic Republic now has more than one million TV sets in operation, it was announced in Berlin on December 26th. This means that roughly one family in four has its own set. The total number of viewers is much higher, since well over one million sets in West Germany and West Berlin are also tuned regularly to the programmes transmitted by the GDR TV service.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Readers might be interested to know what Christmas looked like in the GDR this year from the consumer standpoint. There were abundant geese, the traditional German bird for Christmas dinner, and I managed to get a vast turkey which only just went into my oven. All the other concomitants seemed to be in the shops in liberal quantities — things like nuts and dates and tangerines. Nobody in Germany eats Christmas pudding, but everything needed to make what Mrs Beeton describes as "Christmas Pudding (rich)" was there too. I am rather sorry to report that the American song "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" has penetrated here too: every time I switched on the GDR radio or TV in the days before Christmas I seemed to come on some German Bing Crosby mooing out the words, which are even more sloshy in the German translation.

Down-Under Maths

Perhaps you did not know it, but West Berlin is by far the largest country in the world — in fact its population is probably about as great as that of the rest of the world put together. You don't believe it? Then obviously you doubt the word of Mr King Watson, editor of the Australian newspaper "Sydney Daily Telegraph".

In late autumn last year, Mr Watson paid a visit to Berlin, and reported on his findings in his newspaper on November 16th and subsequent dates. In his first article he dished up most of the usual familiar bromides about East Berlin "most of East Berlin is as the allied bombers left it", "brooding silence", "shoddiness of clothes", and so on. Since, by his own admission, he apparently only visited a small portion of the commercial centre of the city on a Sunday morning, when there are as few people about as there are in the City of London at the same time, his evidence is not very valid.

But it is Mr Watson's statistics which I find most interesting. Writing about new housing in East Berlin he states: "If it is intended as an answer to the ten-thousandfold greater building activity in West Berlin it fails badly".

Let us look more closely at this figure. During the past year approximately 10,000 new flats have been put up in East Berlin. If West Berlin has been ten-thousand times as active, this would mean that 100 million flats had been built there. These flats (only one year's production, mind you) would easily house the total populations of both the United States and the Soviet Union; since West Berlin has been building housing fairly rapidly for the past ten years, it must now have anything up to 1000 million flats, which would accomodate the whole world population, with plenty of room left over.

Altogether, the editor of the "Sydney Daily Telegraph" is a very vague man with figures. Writing about the "line dividing the eastern sector of Berlin itself from the Western sector" he states "The only gap in this line is the Brandenburg Gate". As a matter of cool fact, which he could have ascertained after a moment's inquiry, about 150 different roads pass between the two halves of the divided city, and they are all open to traffic.

If Mr King Watson should visit Berlin again some time in the future I would be glad to show him round East Berlin; he might not be converted to socialism as a result, but he would probably not write such nonsense.

Call a Killer

For some years after the war, the French authorities were looking for a leading SS man, Major-General Heinz Lammerding. They had good reason to, for he had commanded the SS Division "Das Reich", which, among other crimes, was responsible for the complete extermination of the 642 inhabitants of the little French village of Oradour-sur-Glane.

They could not find him, and in July 1951 a French court sentenced him to death in absentia. In his book "The SS: Alibi of a Nation" (London 1956), the British writer Gerald Reitlinger noted:

"Lammerding began to live under his own name in Dusseldorf in the British Zone . . . M. Pleven, the French Minister of Defence, now asked for his extradition, but since September 1948, extradition of war criminals had become practically a dead letter. The British Control Commission and the Foreign Office showed a rousing want of enthusiasm when questioned on the subject . . . Today the (West) German courts have no desire to proceed against SS generals who carried out Himmler orders . . . Lammerding may soon find himself in demand among the nascent high command of the West German Army."

Today Lammerding is running, under his own name, an extremely prosperous building business in Dusseldorf. He lives in a big villa at No. 1 Falkenweg, and drives a big black Mercedes car, registration number D-DW 239. If any reader feels like having a chat with a real live SS killer, he can always put in a call to the telephone number Dusseldorf 42-43-08.

Nazi Nerve

The sheer impudence of the unreconstructed nazis at large and flourishing in West Germany seems unbounded. A Swedish film producer recently made a very good film entitled "Mein Kampf", giving a documentary account of the nazi regime. He took a large part of his material from the nazi film archives. Now Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's favourite film directress, has had the nerve to sue the distributors of the film in France, Switzerland and other countries, claiming massive compensation because the film used a few short extracts from the documentary film which she made for Hitler on the 1935 Nazi Party Rally. Anytime now I expect to see the manufacturers of Eichmann's gas chambers claiming damages from the war-time allies because, by winning the war, they imposed a restraint upon their peaceful trade.

Marvellous Baron

Most people have probably heard of the legendary Baron von Munchausen, the marvellous liar, whose exploits were published in English about 1790. There actually was an aristocratic Munchausen family, and they had a family castle at Leitzkau, south of Magdeburg, now in the GDR. I am glad to note that this historic castle (part of it dates from the eleventh century) is now being thoroughly restored, and will soon serve as a central school for children from the surrounding villages. It will be a bit hard to work the famous baron into the school traditions except, perhaps, for the fact that he seems to have been the first man to reach the moon.

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